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ABSTRACT

This publication reports findings from the 1981 and 1982 Current Population Survey studies conducted by the United States Bureau of the Census regarding the characteristics of the 702,000 noninstitutionalized disabled Hispanics between 16 and 64 years of age. Tables, figures, and text provide information on age distribution, educational attainment, residential patterns, marital status, labor force participation, income and economic status, and occupational categories of this population. The "typical" working-age disabled Hispanic adult is described as: 40 years of age; has a ninth-grade education; married; not in the labor force; and has about $3,700 in income from all sources in 1980. (CB)

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DISABLED ADULTS OF HISPANIC ORIGIN

A STATISTICAL REPORT DRAWN FROM CENSUS BUREAU DATA

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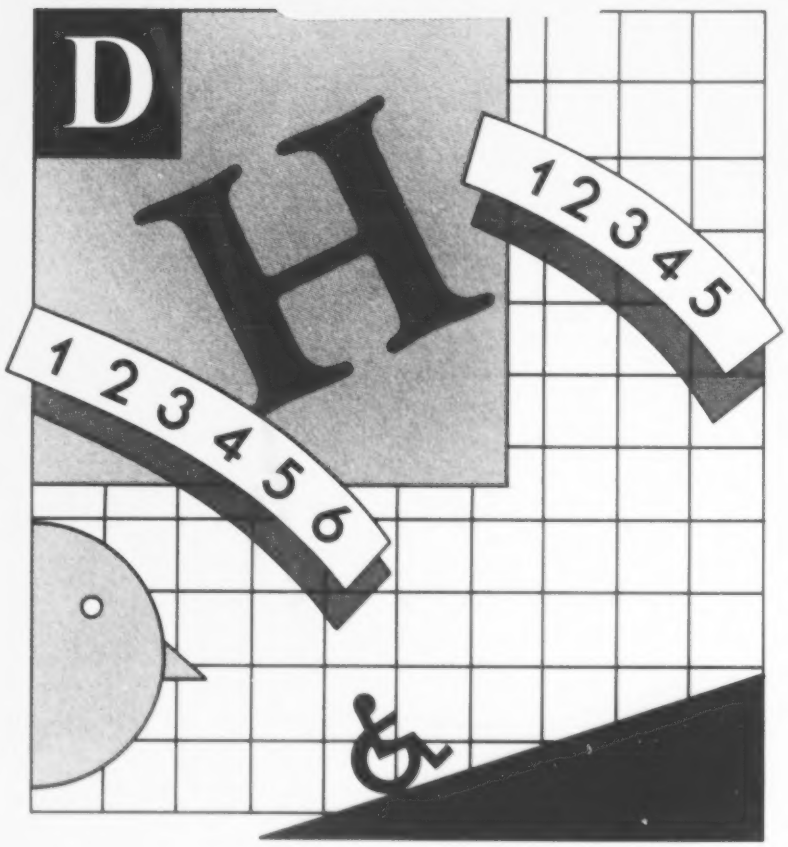

About the Author

Frank Bowe, Ph.D., L.L.D., has become interested in the population of persons of Spanish origin as this group has exploded in size during the past decade. In 1972, while research scientist at New York University, he studied the special problems of persons who were members of a linguistic minority within another minority, that of persons with disabilities. This is his first in-depth review of the demographics of the Hispanic disabled population.

His latest book is *Computing and Special Needs*, published by Sybex, Inc., Berkeley, CA. Dr. Bowe lives with his wife and two daughters in Lawrence, Long Island, NY.

Author's Note

This publication reports upon findings from the 1981 and 1982 Current Population Survey (CPS) studies conducted by the Bureau of the Census, U. S. Department of Commerce. The author acknowledges with gratitude the assistance of John McNeil and Lawrence Haber of the population division of the Bureau of the Census, and of Bernard Posner, executive director of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped.

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Thumbnail Sketches

The "typical" working-age Hispanic adult:

- is 30 years old
- has a eleventh-grade education
- is married
- is in the labor force
- works full- or part-time
- had about $8,000 in income from all sources in 1980

The "typical" working-age disabled Hispanic adult:

- is 40 years of age
- has a ninth-grade level of education
- is married
- is not in the labor force
- does not work full- or part-time
- had about $3,700 in income from all sources in 1980

Source: Current Population Survey, March, 1981.

Introduction

The Hispanic population is one of the fastest growing segments of the American working-age populace. It is a relatively young population, in part because many of its members are immigrants and in part because of a high birth rate. Today, it represents almost one out of every twenty persons in the 16-64 year-old American public.

This document presents data which help describe those Hispanics of working age who report one or more work disabilities. The data in this publication are subject to the same limitations that affect figures in other reports in the series, e.g., *Black Adults with Disabilities*. Specifically, the information contained here relates only to persons of working age; that is, this report says nothing about persons under the age of 16 or over the age of 64. Secondly, the figures cover only persons who are not institutionalized. And data on Hispanic adults with disabilities include only those Hispanics reporting one or more work disabilities.

In addition, with respect to employment figures, some of the data in this publication should be treated with considerable care. Given that only about 5% of the working-age population of the country is Hispanic, and that only one in every twelve of these persons reports a disability, numbers of Hispanics with disabilities who work in different occupations are small. Accordingly, proportions rather than absolute numbers generally are used in this report.

The statistics offered here derive from a new and exciting series of investigations. Since 1981, the Census Bureau has included disability-related questions in its annual March Current Population Survey (CPS) studies. Conducted monthly, primarily to assemble figures upon which to base reports on the unemployment rate in the nation's workforce, the CPS is highly reliable and produces figures very comparable to those accumulated by the U.S. Census. The chief advantage in using CPS rather than Census data is that the CPS data are much more rapidly available. Figures from the 1981 and 1982 March CPS studies are included in this publication.

This report is one in a series of four. *Disabled Adults in America*, *Disabled Women in America*, and *Black Adults with Disabilities* are the others.

The term "Hispanic" refers to persons who self-identified as having origins or ancestry that derived from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Central or South America, or some other Spanish nation. It is important for the reader to bear in mind that persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

"Disability" refers to a health condition which prevented a person from working or limited the amount or kind of work a person could do. For a more complete treatment of the methodology employed by the Current Population Survey, see *Disabled Adults in America*.

Executive Summary

One working-age Hispanic adult in every twelve is disabled. Of 8,325,000 Hispanics between the ages of 16 and 64 who are not in institutions, 702,000, or 8.4%, are disabled.

Most disabled Hispanics of working age are women. This is true, in large part, because women outnumber men in the general working-age Hispanic population by 52% to 48%. A total of 372,000 disabled Hispanics, or 53%, are female, while 330,000, or 47%, are male.

The average disabled Hispanic of working age is 40 years of age, has a ninth-grade level of education, does not work, nor is actively seeking employment. Income from all sources was under $4,000 in 1980.

More than eight in ten (82.6%) reside in cities; of these, almost two in three live in central city areas. About four in ten (38.8%) live in the Western part of the country, with another three in ten (30.2%) in the South. Half (50.4%) are married, while 23.8% never married.

Better than one in every three (36.5%) lives with an income below the poverty line. This is largely due to the fact that only 41.7% of the men and 16.9% of the women are in the labor force (either working or actively looking for work); 31.6% of the men and 13.3% of the women work.

The unemployment rate in March 1982 among disabled Hispanic women was 21.5%, while among men it was 24.2%. These levels are slightly lower than those of disabled blacks but markedly higher than those among disabled whites.

Size of the Population

About one Hispanic adult in every twelve (8.4%) reports a work disability. Among Hispanic males, the rate is 8.2%; among females, 8.6%. The proportions are similar to those found among white adults and markedly lower than those which obtain with black adults.

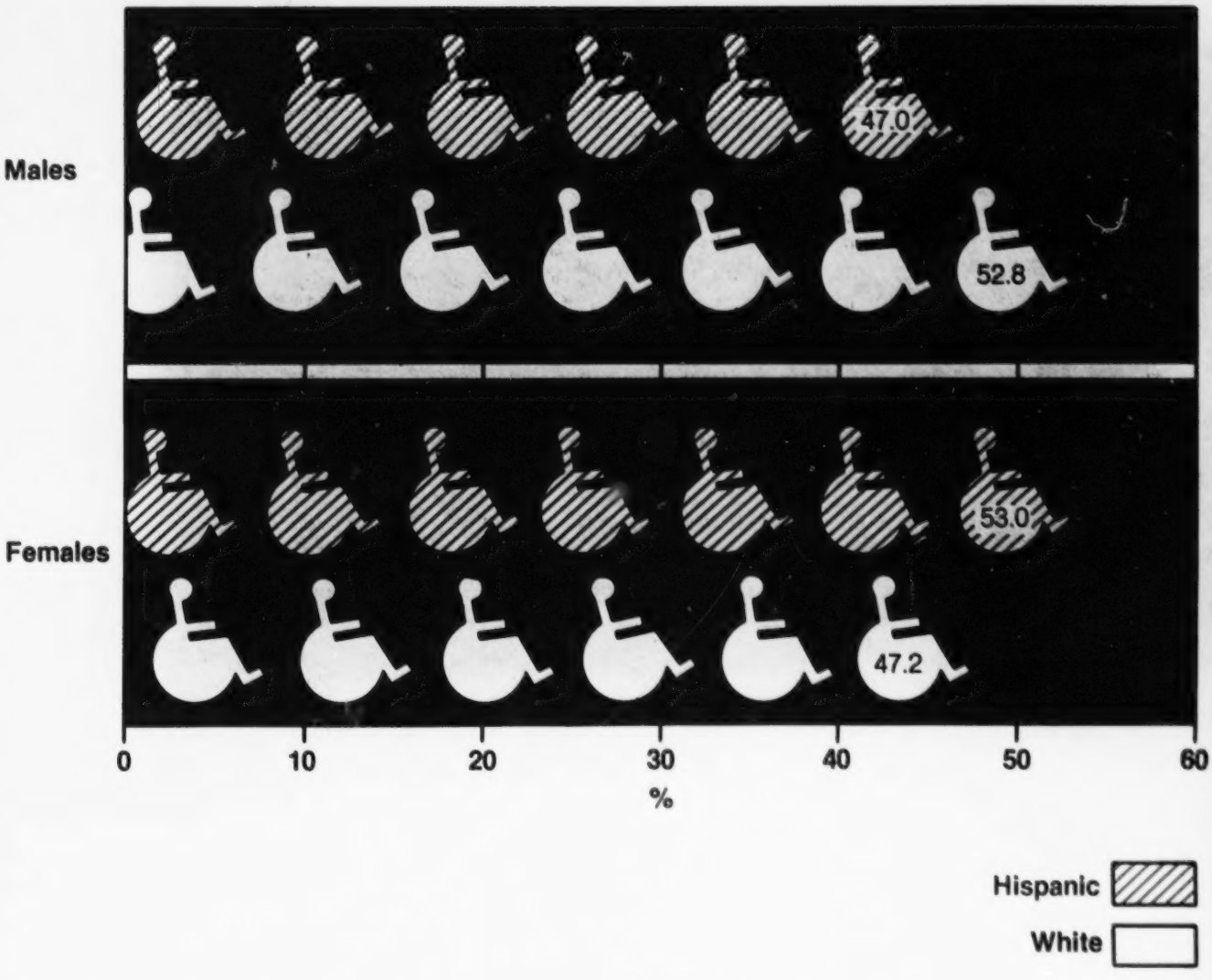
One Hispanic adult in every twelve (8.4%) reports a work disability.

The Hispanic disabled population aged 16-64 and not in institutions numbered 702,000 in March 1981, according to the Current Population Survey. Fully 53% of these persons were women. In fact, as Table 1 illustrates, the distribution by sex of disability in the Hispanic population is the mirror-image of that in the white population. The divergence is largely accounted for by the fact that in the general population of Hispanic adults, women comprise 52% of the total, while men comprise 48%.

The distribution by sex in the Hispanic population is similar to that in the black adult population. Disability is much more common among blacks, however, at 14.1%, than it is among Hispanics or among whites.

Table 1

Hispanic and White Disabled Adults Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

Characteristics of the Population

Age

Hispanic adults of working age are *much older* than are other Hispanics. Almost half (49.4%) of all disabled Hispanics of working age are between 45 and 64 years of age, as compared with fewer than one in five nondisabled Hispanics. A similarly dramatic difference appears at the other end of the age range: fully twice the proportion of nondisabled Hispanics is between 16 and 34 years of age than is the case with Hispanics who report a work disability.

Almost half (49.4%) of all disabled Hispanics of working age are between 45 and 64 years of age.

As compared to disabled whites of working age, Hispanics with a work disability are markedly younger, reflecting the relative youth of the Hispanic population as a whole.

The average disabled Hispanic of working age is 40 years old, younger than the average 51 years of age among the disabled white population, but older than the average working age of 30 years among the nondisabled Hispanic population. Blacks of working age who report a disability average 42 years of age.

In Table 2 appears a comparison between Hispanic and white persons by age range and disability status.

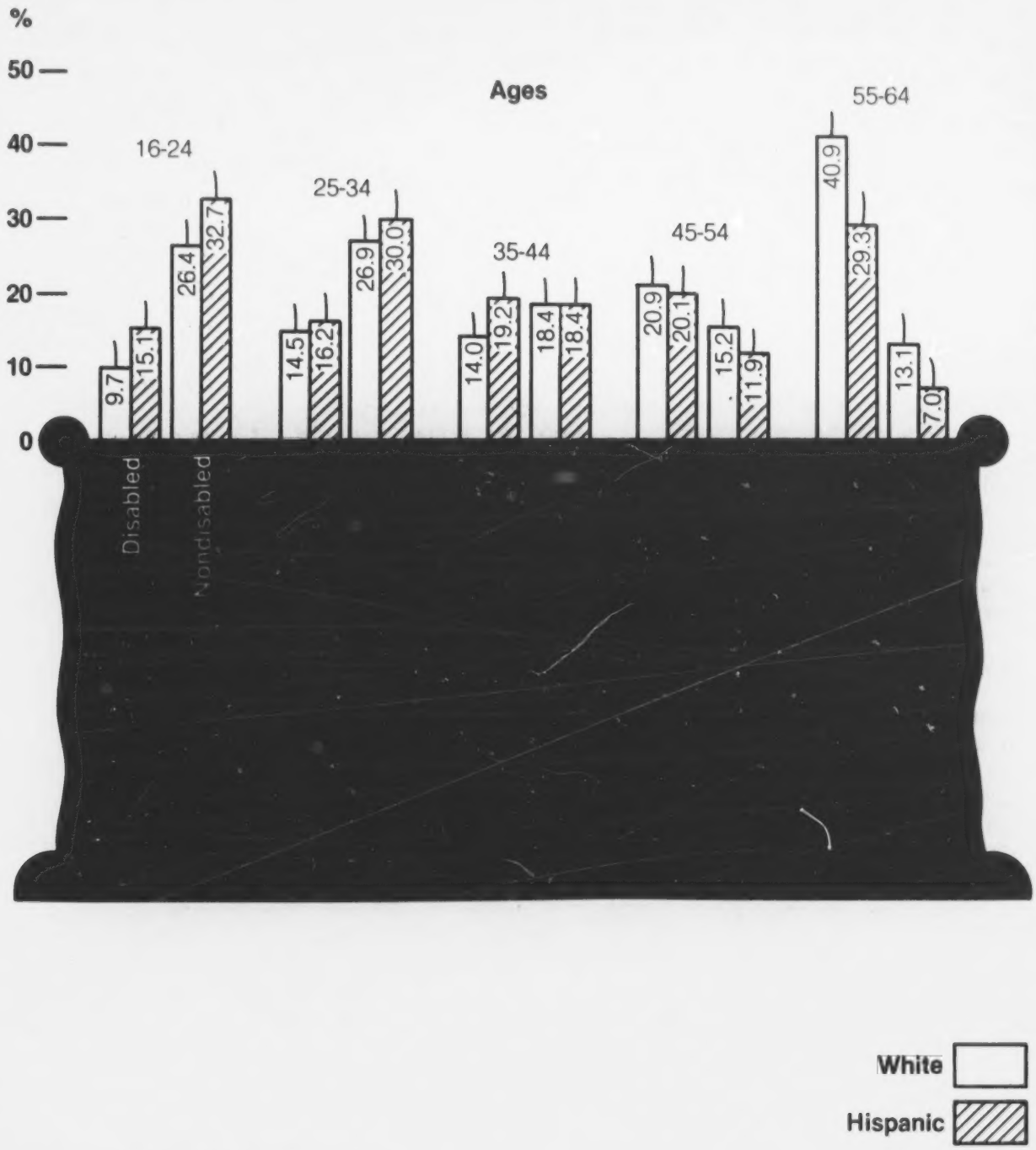
Education

Disabled Hispanics have lower levels of education attainment than are found among disabled blacks, disabled women of all races, and disabled whites. As compared to other Hispanics of working age, they have acquired less education.

The average disabled Hispanic of working age has a ninth-grade level of education. Fully four in every ten completed fewer than eight years of formal schooling. Almost one in three (32.8%) has more than eight but fewer than twelve years of education. Not quite one in every ten (9.7%) has more than a high-school level of education. Only one in every thirty-three (3.0%) is a college graduate.

Table 2

Age Range, by Disability Status: Hispanic and White Adults Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

Disabled whites are almost three times as likely to complete college, nearly twice as likely to attend at least some college, and twice as likely to graduate from high school as are disabled Hispanics. Black working-age adults with disabilities are slightly more likely to have some college education and somewhat less likely to have terminated their schooling before reaching high school.

Why are education attainment levels so low among disabled Hispanics? Probably, the main reason is that little schooling leads to physical and low-paying employment, which in turn makes individuals subject to disabling accidents and illnesses.

For other Hispanics, disability in the early years of life restricted education attainment.

The fact that fully 73.3%, or almost three out of every four, disabled Hispanics failed to complete high school helps explain the low levels of income, the low levels of participation in the nation's labor force, and the high proportions among those working of employment in occupations requiring heavy physical labor.

Table 3 offers data on education attainment among disabled Hispanics, nondisabled Hispanics, and disabled whites of working age.

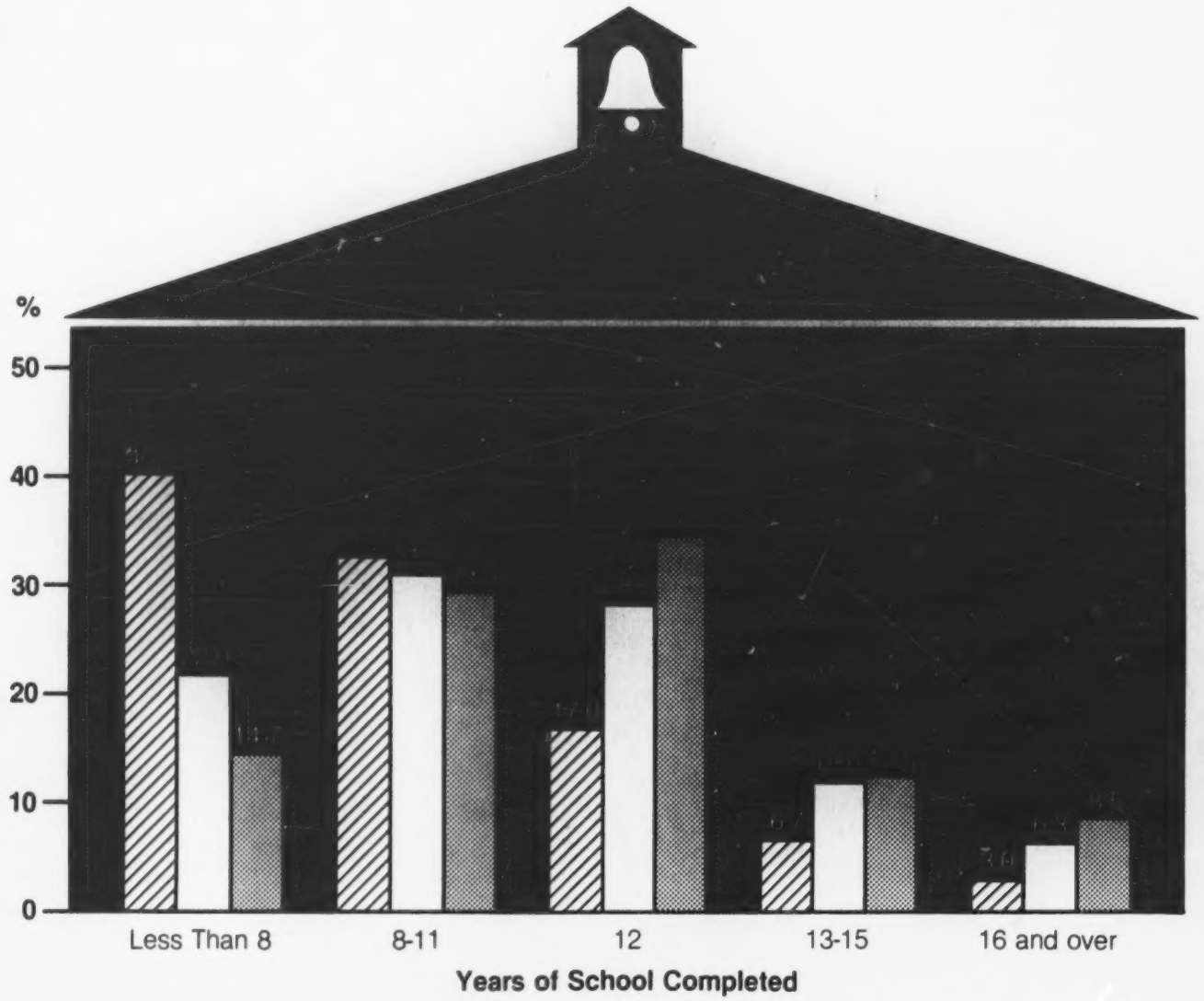
Residence

Eight in ten disabled Hispanics reside in cities. Slightly more than half live in central city locations. Of the 82.6% residing in urban settings, 63.9% live in a central city.

As compared to disabled blacks, Hispanic adults with work disabilities are less likely to be urban or central city residents. As compared to disabled whites, however, these Hispanic adults are only half as likely to live outside a city. The residential patterns parallel those of nondisabled Hispanic adults quite closely.

Table 3

Years of School Completed: Disabled Hispanics, Nondisabled Hispanics, and Disabled Whites Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

The general Hispanic population tends to reside in the Western part of the country more than do other races. Among disabled Hispanics of working age, 38.8% live in the West, 30.2% in the South, 24.4% in the Northeast, and only 6.6% in the North Central region. Again, these patterns parallel those of nondisabled Hispanics.

Table 4 presents data on urban and nonurban residential patterns among disabled Hispanics, nondisabled Hispanics, and disabled whites of working age.

In Figure 1 appear proportions of these three groups by geographic region.

Marital Status

About half (50.4%) of all adult disabled Hispanics are married. Not quite one in every four (23.8%) never married, while almost one in ten (9.8%) is divorced. As compared to other Hispanics of working age, those with disabilities are somewhat less likely to be married or never married, but twice as likely to be separated and markedly more likely to be divorced. Reflecting their relative greater age, disabled members are more than four times as likely as are other members of the Hispanic adult population to be widowed.

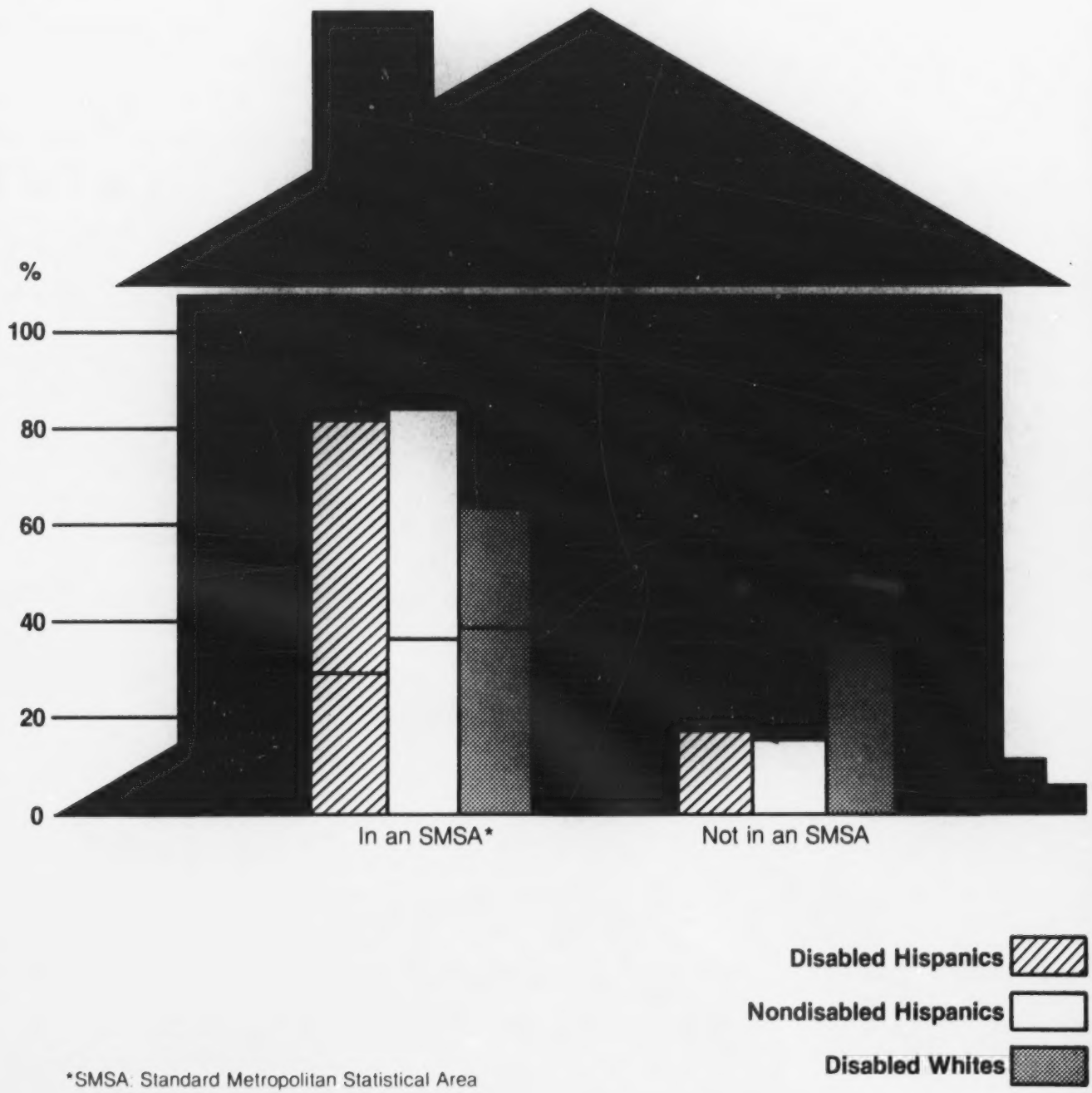
As compared to disabled blacks, Hispanic adults with work disabilities are more likely to be married and less likely to be divorced. Compared to disabled whites, Hispanic disabled adults are less likely to be married but more likely never to have married.

Table 5 presents data on disabled and nondisabled Hispanics by marital status.

Within the disabled Hispanic population, important differences obtain in marital status according to sex. As Figure 2 illustrates, males are much more likely to be married but much less likely to be divorced.

Table 4

Residential Patterns: Disabled Hispanics, Nondisabled Hispanics, and Disabled Whites Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions

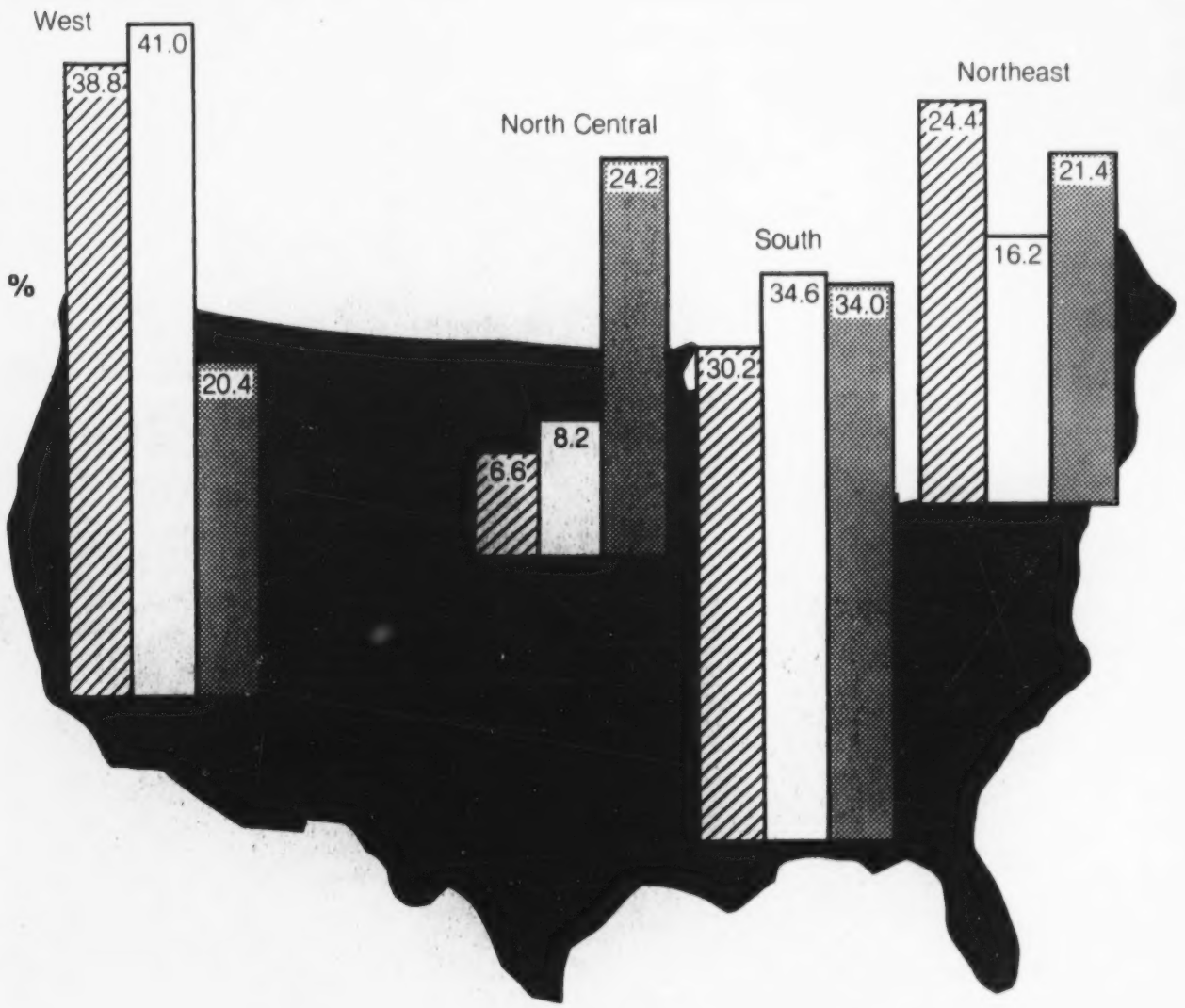


*SMSA: Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area

Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

Figure 1

Geographical Distribution: Disabled Hispanics, Nondisabled Hispanics, and Disabled Whites Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

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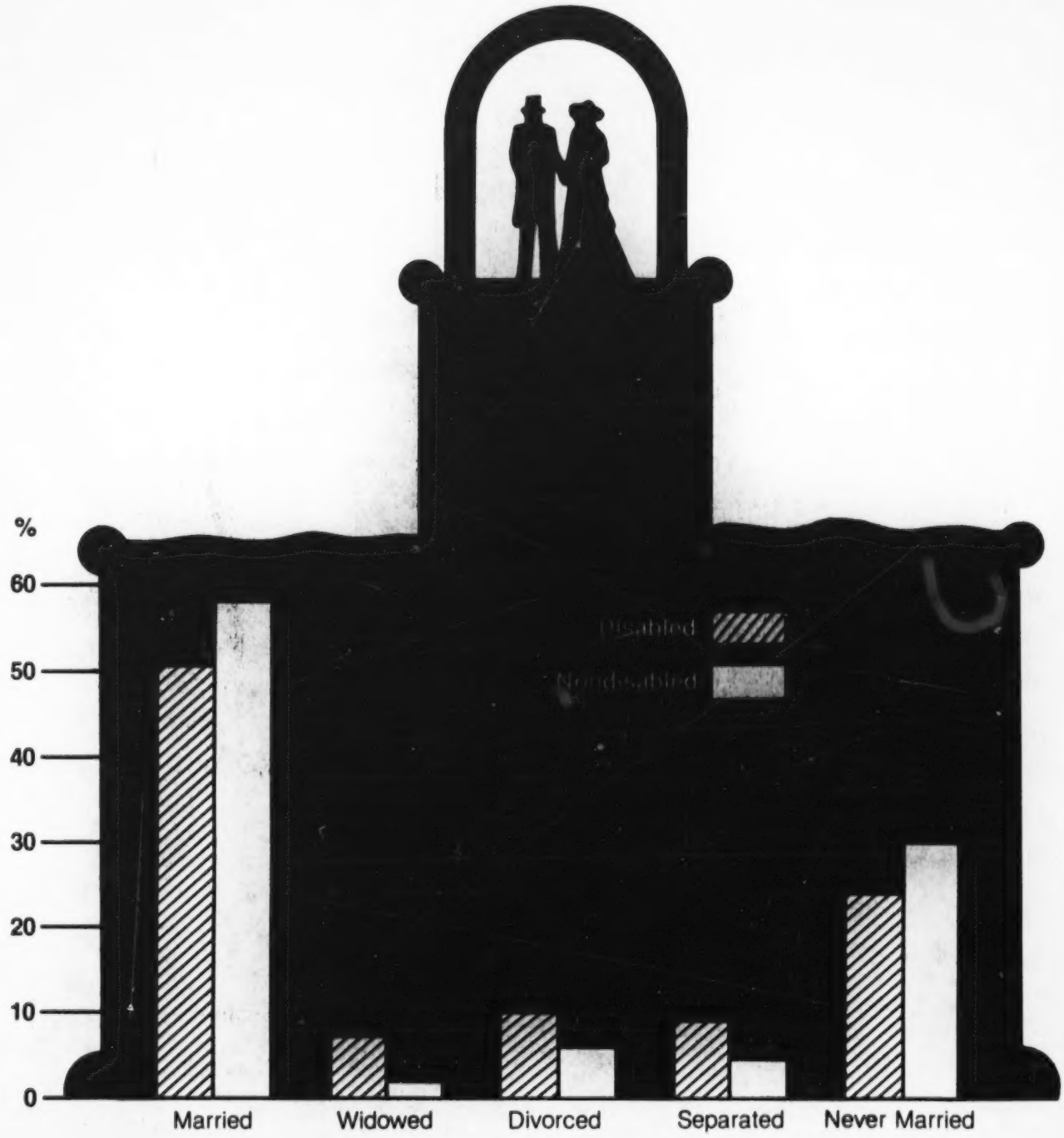
Table 5

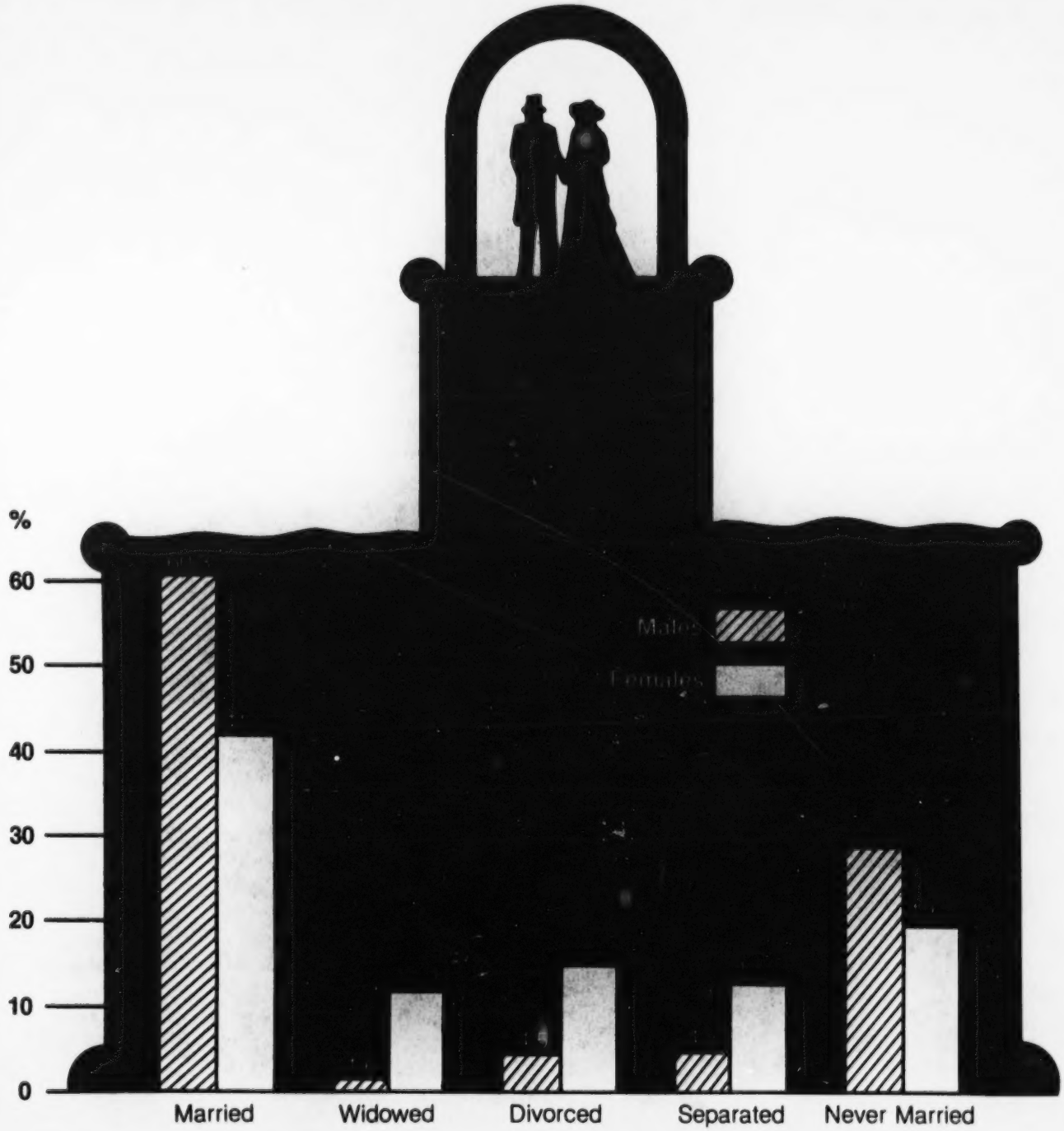
Marital Status, by Disability Status: Hispanic Adults Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

Figure 2

Marital Status, by Sex: Hispanic Adults With Work Disability Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

Labor Force Participation

Most disabled Hispanics of working age are neither working nor looking for work. They are not in the labor force. Just 13.3% of the women and 31.6% of the men work.

In March, 1982, unemployment among the women stood at 21.5%; among the men that month the rate was 24.2%. Overall, 23.3% of working-age disabled Hispanics were unemployed.

As compared to disabled blacks, Hispanics with work disabilities are more likely to be in the labor force and more likely to be working. As compared to disabled whites and to nondisabled Hispanics, however, Hispanics with disabilities are less likely to perform or seek work.

The Census Bureau's sample in the March CPS studies is too small to allow confidence in the numbers derived for employment patterns among disabled Hispanics, particularly when further divisions are made for sex and for occupational category. Accordingly, Figure 3, which offers data on proportions of white and disabled males who are employed by age range, and Figure 4, which presents similar data for females, are more helpful for perceiving broad tendencies than for analyzing numbers.

Income and Economic Status

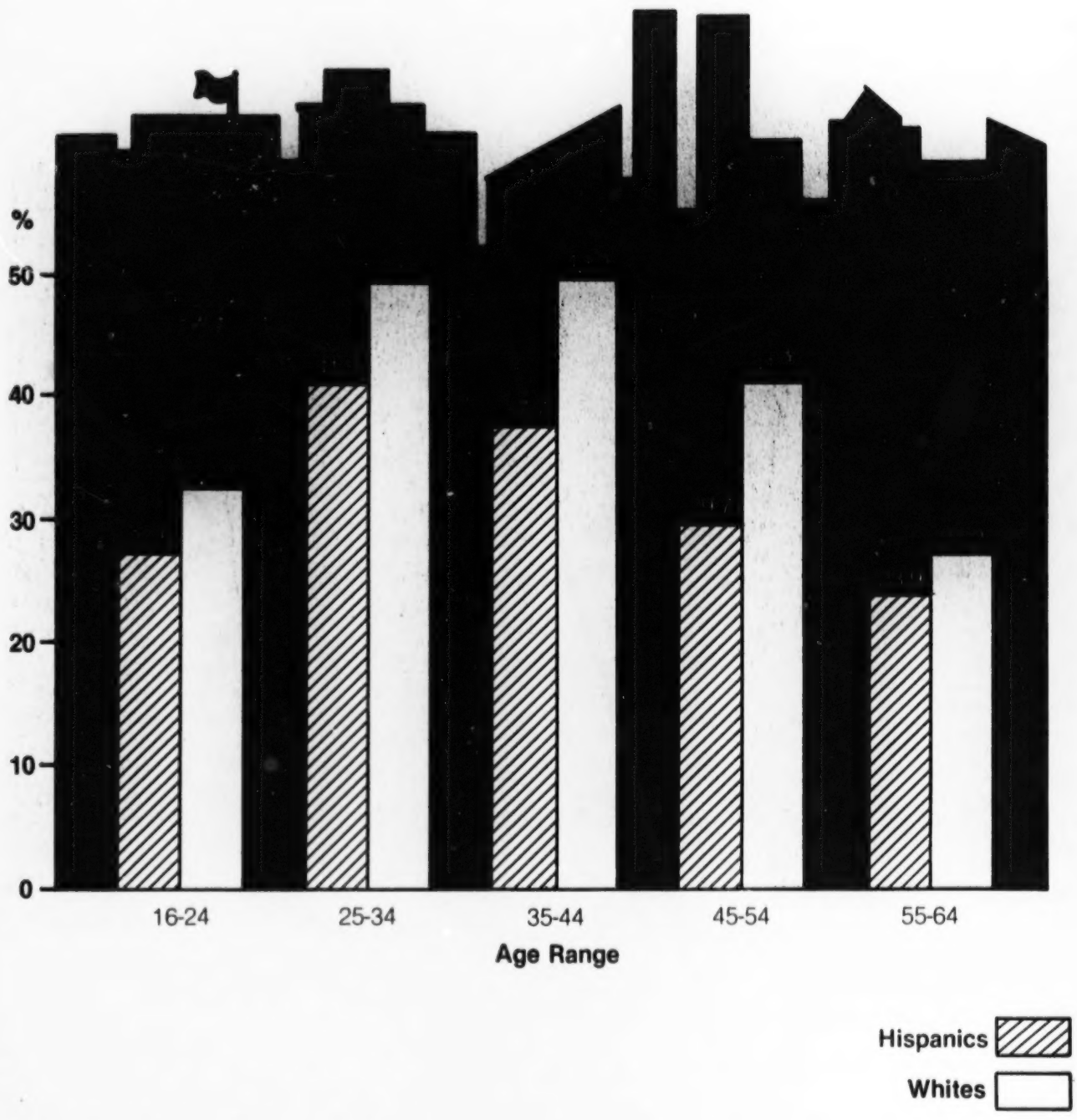
Three in ten disabled Hispanics of working age report incomes from all sources of under $2,000 a year. Another one in four (26.6%) has an income between that level and $3,999 annually. By contrast, only 17.6% report incomes over $8,000 per year.

Figure 5 illustrates these data.

As compared to disabled blacks, Hispanics with work disabilities report somewhat higher incomes, apparently because a larger proportion of Hispanics than blacks work. As compared to nondisabled Hispanics and to disabled whites, however, the incomes of disabled Hispanics are low.

Figure 3

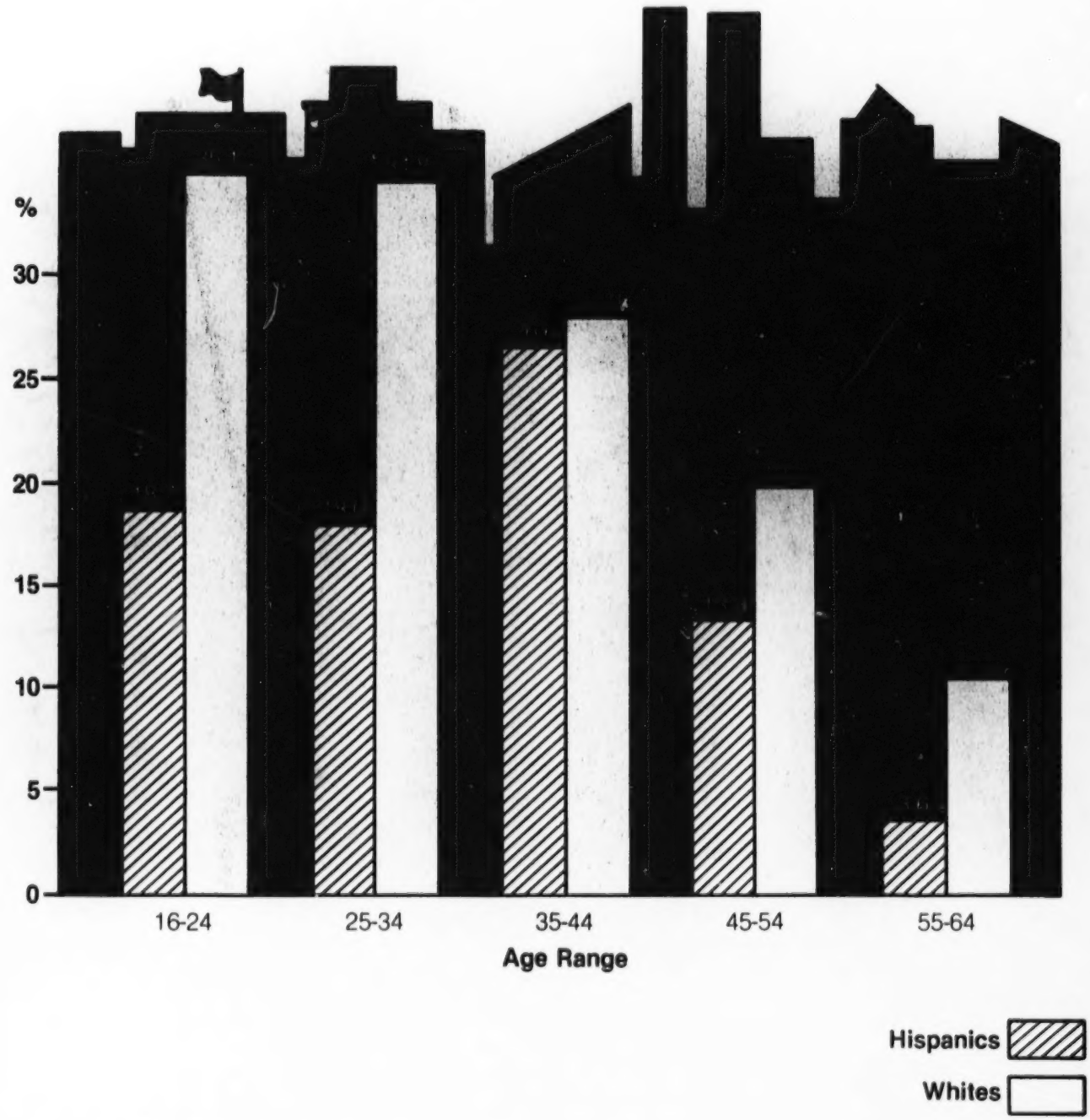
Proportions Employed, by Age Range: Hispanic and White Disabled Males Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1982.

Figure 4

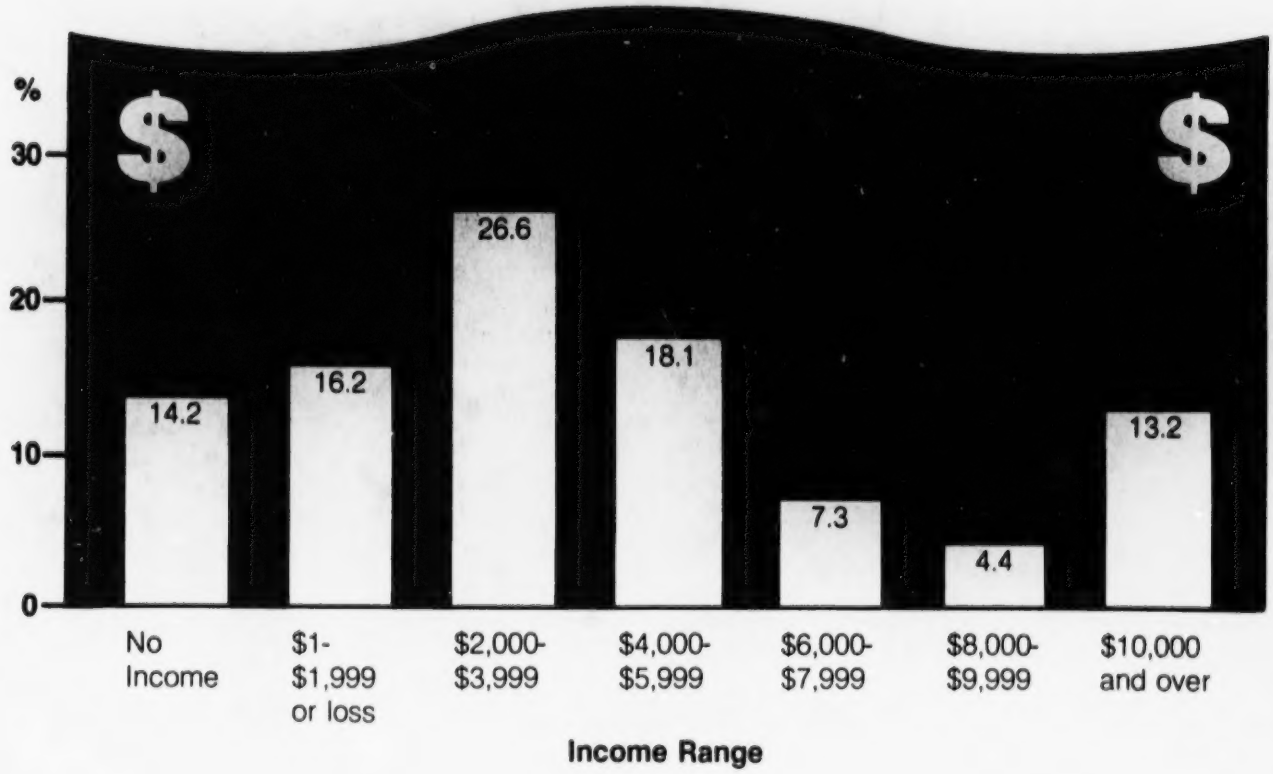
Proportions Employed, by Age Range: Hispanic and White Disabled Females Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1982.

Figure 5

Income in 1980: Hispanic Disabled Adults Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

As Figure 6 shows, more than one out of every three (36.5%) disabled Hispanics lives on an income below the official poverty line.

By comparison, one disabled adult in four, one disabled woman in three, and one disabled black in two was below the poverty level in 1980.

Occupational Category

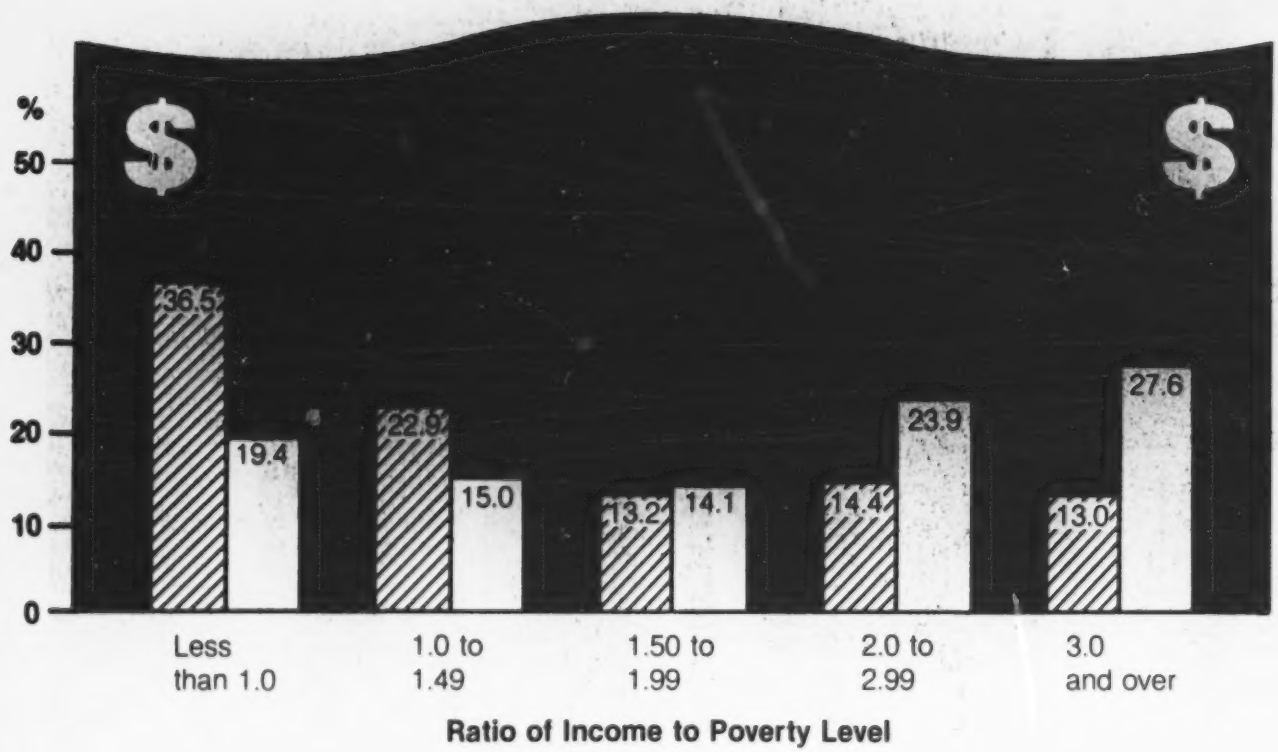
Disabled working-age Hispanic adults tend to work in the same occupational categories as do other Hispanics. The proportions in different job groupings are also quite similar to that among disabled blacks: both groups tend to be well represented in craft, operative, laborer, and service occupations but relatively absent from professional, technical, managerial and administrative jobs.

These occupational category patterns reflect the low levels of education.

Table 6 offers data on disabled and nondisabled Hispanics of working age according to occupational category reported. The information is presented for males separately from females to portray differences by sex in job patterns. These data should be interpreted with care. They include only employed Hispanic adults and divide that population by disability status, by sex and by occupational category. The number of individuals in each cell is too small for numerical analysis to be conducted with confidence, despite the fact that the data represent averages compiled from the 1981 and 1982 CPS March studies.

Figure 6

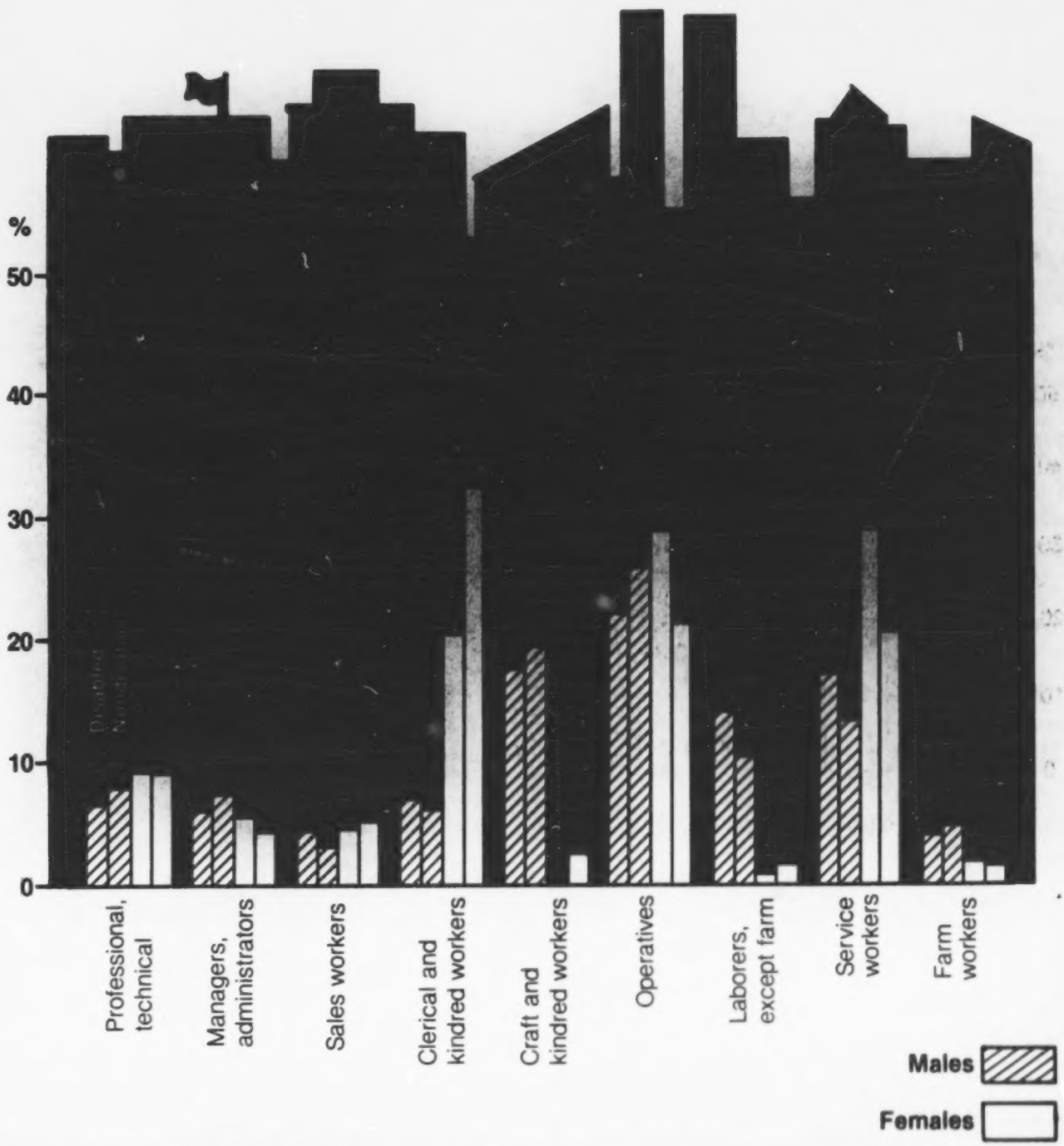
Ratio of Income in 1980 to Poverty Level, by Disability Status: Hispanic Adults Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981.

Table 6

Occupational Category, by Disability Status, by Sex: Employed Hispanic Adults Aged 16-64 and Not in Institutions



Source: Current Population Survey, March 1981 and March 1982.

Technical Notes

1. Readers having a special interest in the disabled Hispanic population's employment patterns are urged to contact the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, for information about the availability of data which might supplement those offered here. Write: Bureau of the Census, USDOC, Washington, D.C. 20233.

2. Additional information, particularly about younger and older disabled Hispanics, may be obtained by contacting other sources of data, including:

   (1) National Center for Health Statistics, Washington, D.C. 20201. Ask about the most recent Health Interview Survey (HIS) report;

   (2) Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20201. Ask about program statistics on special education and rehabilitation;

   (3) Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Ask about the most recent data on disability status among Hispanic individuals.

3. For a comprehensive statistical report on the 1982 Current Population Survey, see: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 127, *Labor Force Status and Other Characteristics of Persons With a Work Disability: 1982*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1983 ($4.50).

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